

30 years of studies have shown that this desensitizes our children to violence and to the consequences of it.

We now know that by the time the typical American child reaches the age of 18, he or she has seen 200,000 dramatized acts of violence and 40,000 dramatized murders. Kids become attracted to it and more numb to its consequences. As their exposure to violence grows, so, in some deeply troubling cases of particularly vulnerable children, does the taste for it. We should not be surprised that half the video games a typical seventh grader plays are violent.

Anyone who doubts the impact of the cultural assault can look at what now, over 30 years, amounts to somewhere over 300 studies, all of whom show that there is a link between sustained exposure, hour after hour, day after day, week after week, year after year, to violent entertainment and violent behavior.

What the studies say, quite simply, is that the boundary between fantasy and reality violence, which is a clear line for most adults, can become very blurred for vulnerable children. Kids steeped in the culture of violence do become desensitized to it and more capable of committing it themselves.

That is why I have strongly urged people in the entertainment industry to consider the consequences of what they create and how they advertise it. One can value the first amendment right to free speech and at the same time care for and act with restraint. Our administration has worked to give parents more tools to protect their kids, to block violent programming from entering their living room with the V-chip and the rating system. We've made progress on parental screening for Internet and ratings for Internet game sites.

Still, when violent entertainment made for adults is marketed to children, it undermines the rating system designed to protect them. And if you look at some of these ads, it's hard to argue with a straight face that the games were made for adults in the first place, like the one Arthur mentioned.

Advertisements have a particular role here. They have the power to egg children on and lure them in. Every parent knows what response a commercial for sugar cereal or the

latest "Star Wars" toy will get from their children. People advertise because it works. They want that product, and one way or the other, they're determined to get it. So we ought to think twice about the impact of ads for so-called "first-person shooter video games," like the recent ad for a game that invites players to, and I quote, "Get in touch with your gun-toting, cold-blooded murdering side."

I was given—today Arthur brought me the magazine with the ad that he mentioned, and he was kind enough to mark it for me. There really is a gun here. It says, "More fun than shooting your neighbor's cat." I was given another ad that says, "What kind of psycho drives a school bus into a war zone?" And here's a school bus, heavily armed. This came out right after the incident in Springfield, Oregon.

Here's an ad that turns the argument I just made on its head: "Psychiatrists say it's important to feel something when you kill." And then it goes on to say, "You ought to get this technology because it bumps, and you feel it." It says, "Every sensation, every vibration, every mutilation, nine programmable weapons buttons. Customizable feedback software. Push the stick that pushes back, and feel your pain." And here's one that's the most unbelievable of all. It says, "Kill your friends guilt-free."

Now, obviously, Arthur has the inner strength and the good upbringing to reject that kind of violent appeal. Most of our children do, but not all of our children do. We cannot be surprised when this kind of thing has an impact on our most vulnerable children. Is it 100 percent to blame? No. It's easier to get guns in this society. Parents on average spend 22 hours a week less with their children than they did 30 years ago because of the demands of work and commuting, the busyness of daily life.

But when you put it all together, there are bound to be explosive negative consequences. That's why today I am asking the Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission to study the extent to which the video game, music, and movie markets do actually market violence to children, and whether those industries are abiding by their own voluntary systems of regulations.

To any company that sells violent products, I say, children are more than consumers. I understand nobody made anybody buy any of this stuff. But every day, a responsible society declines to do some things for short-term gain that it can do. And that is what we have to think about. These children are our future, our most precious resource. Raising them is any society's most important job.

Don't make young people want what your own rating systems say they shouldn't have. I might say again, as has already been acknowledged, many, many people in the entertainment industry have worked with us on this, on the ratings system, on the V-chip, on the screening technology for the Internet.

I noticed one network executive, a few days ago, actually canceled a program because its violent content was inappropriate, and I applaud that. But I also read with concern the news that some of the new programming coming up for this fall on some networks will be even more violent than last year's. The time has come to show some restraint, even if it has a short-term impact on the bottom line.

I also want to challenge the owners of movie theaters and video stores, distributors, anyone at any point of sale, enforce the rating systems on the products that you sell. Check the ID's. Draw the line. If underage children are buying violent video games or getting into R-rated movies, the rating system should be enforced to put a stop to it. And if, as many of us suspect, there is still too much gratuitous violence in PG-13-rated movies, the rating systems themselves should be reevaluated.

I want to thank Senators Brownback, Lieberman, Hatch, and Kohl for the bipartisan work they have done on this issue. Again, I want to commend State Representative Mary Lou Dickerson from Washington, who read about young Arthur, helped to create a task force on video game violence; and thanks to her work with Pam and the Mothers Against Violence in America and the Washington Retailers' Association, who are all represented here today, video game retailers in Washington State now voluntarily sign a pledge to parents, committing themselves to check ID's and block sales of violent games to minors. That's something that

ought to happen in every State in the United States of America.

Again I say, we can do something about this. It will take a grassroots campaign. It will take everybody doing his or her part. This is a problem we face together, a problem America can solve together. There is no more urgent task for our future.

You were all looking at this young man speaking today, thinking, what a wonderful thing that a person that young could speak so clearly, so confidently, about things that are so right. You look around at the other young people here today who are involved in this effort in some way or another, and you thank God that we have this legacy of children.

A lot of those kids that haven't made it through all these school violence incidents were just as good, just as fine, had just as much to give the world. We've got to quit fooling around with this. We've got a chance. Our hearts are open. Our ears are open. Our heads are thinking.

I know this stuff sells. But that doesn't make it right.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:46 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Arthur Sawe, who introduced the President, and his mother, Caroline; Mayor DeeDee Corradini of Salt Lake City, UT, president, U.S. Conference of Mayors; Mayor Timothy Kaine of Richmond, VA; and Maryland county executives Wayne Curry, Prince Georges County, and C.A. (Dutch) Ruppertsberger, Baltimore County. The transcript made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Letter to the Attorney General and the Chairman of the Federal Trade Commission on a Study on Youth Violence and Media Marketing

June 1, 1999

Dear Madam Attorney General: (Dear Mr. Chairman:)

New technologies have enabled us to learn, work, and grow in ways that were unimaginable just a few years ago, and modern media has brought culture, entertainment, and education to a wider audience than ever

before. With this great power, there also comes an enormous responsibility to ensure that parents have the tools they need so that the movies children watch, the music they listen to, and the video games they play reflect the values that parents want to pass on to their children.

Too often today children are exposed to images that glamorize violence and desensitize children to it. Numerous studies have shown that this kind of violent programming can promote violent tendencies in children. Media violence increases children's aggression towards others and promotes the development of a sense of callousness towards violence. And such programming can have a particularly negative effect on children who are already vulnerable.

My Administration has worked hard to give parents the information they need to make the right choices for their children. My Administration has brought about a breakthrough agreement by the television industry to create a content-based voluntary ratings system that informs viewers of the appropriateness of the programs they watch. Along with the V-Chip, this rating system will enable parents to choose the programs their children watch, and allow them to better control the images to which their children are exposed.

Today, the motion picture, recording, and video game industries also use content-based ratings to improve the choices parents have. If, however, these industries market violent or other inappropriate materials, rated for adults, to children, then they undermine the effective functioning of the ratings systems. And the industries make it harder for parents to control the movies, music, and games to which their children are exposed.

Therefore, I am requesting that the Federal Trade Commission and the Department of Justice to conduct a study on the marketing practices of the motion picture, recording, and video game industries with regard to material rated for adults to determine whether and to what extent these industries market such material to children. Among other matters, the study should examine whether such violent material rated for adults is advertised or promoted in media outlets in which minors comprise a substantial per-

centage of the audience. The study also should examine whether these advertisements are intended to and in fact attract underage audiences.

As a result of this study, we will learn more about how violence is marketed to our children. I thank you for your efforts in this area and your attention to this project.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Attorney General Janet Reno and Chairman Robert Pitofsky of the Federal Trade Commission.

Statement on the Resignation of Mark D. Gearan as Director of the Peace Corps

June 1, 1999

Today I am announcing that my good friend and trusted adviser Mark Gearan will be leaving his position as the Director of the Peace Corps later this summer. Mark has accepted the exciting challenge of serving as the next president of Hobart and William Smith Colleges, one of our Nation's most distinguished academic institutions. The trustees of the colleges have made a very wise decision in selecting Mark Gearan as their new president. He is gifted, humane, a leader, and deeply committed to the education of young people. I know that he will bring great vision to the colleges as they enter the next century.

I have relied on Mark Gearan's skills, wisdom, and talents for many years. He was a close aide to me from the time I first sought the Presidency; he served as Vice President Gore's campaign manager in the 1992 election; and he served me in the White House as Deputy Chief of Staff and Director of Communications.

One of the best personnel decisions I have made as President was to appoint Mark Gearan as the Director of the Peace Corps. I believe he has been one of the most successful Directors since President Kennedy established the Peace Corps in 1961. He has rejuvenated the Peace Corps and demonstrated a deep commitment to its legacy of service and the women and men who serve

as Peace Corps volunteers. He can be proud that the Peace Corps will soon have more volunteers serving overseas than at any time in a generation.

Mark strengthened the Peace Corps in many ways. He has established the Crisis Corps, a new program within the Peace Corps that enables former volunteers to help people in other countries recover from the effects of natural disasters and humanitarian crises. He established new volunteer programs in South Africa, Jordan, and Bangladesh, and has managed the Peace Corps with great skill and care. This record of performance has convinced me, and the Congress, that the Peace Corps should field 10,000 volunteers, and I was proud to sign into law an authorization bill that will put us on the path toward achieving this goal by the year 2003.

I thank Mark for his friendship and service. Hillary and I will miss Mark, his wife, Mary, and their two daughters, Madeleine and Kathleen. We wish them the very best as they take this new step in their lives.

**Remarks on Presenting the
Commander in Chief's Trophy to the
United States Air Force Academy
Falcons in Colorado Springs,
Colorado**

June 2, 1999

Thank you very much, General Oelstrom, Coach DeBerry, members of the team, and family and friends. You know, one of the best things about being the President are the things that every President gets to do. I mean, every year I turn on the White House Christmas tree; every year I give a pardon to a Thanksgiving turkey. You know, there are things you do every year. And when the history of our administration is written, I will be credited with instituting a new permanent tradition. Every year I give the Commander in Chief's Trophy to the Air Force Academy. There has been only one lapse in 7 years now. It's been an amazing experience.

I follow football very closely, and I know a lot of people think this is the best Falcon team ever. You won the conference. You had a great record, a top-10 finish. You won the

conference. You won your bowl game, beat Army and Navy by a combined 70 points. I hope the press won't report that. *[Laughter]* I still have a few more trips to make to those academies. *[Laughter]*

It was a truly amazing thing. And to me, in some ways, the most impressive statistic of all was that for 2 years in a row you were, next to Ohio State, the second best defensive team in the country. I've actually met the Ohio State football team, and they're slightly larger. *[Laughter]* I don't think they could fly jet airplanes—lift them maybe, but not fly them.

So I have really been amazed at the consistency of performance here. And I think it's a real tribute not only to the young men but, obviously, to the coach and to the spirit and to the idea that excellence can be achieved against considerable odds.

And it's a great honor for me to be here. I congratulate you again. And I thank you for making this a tradition. And I think you probably cannot imagine how many young athletes there are out there all over America who, because you have been able to achieve this level of excellence while pursuing a rigorous academic program, a rigorous training program, being in this institution of higher education for other purposes primarily, there are all kinds of young people who believe they can do the same thing. And that's worth a great deal in a world where it's not so easy to be young anymore. And I thank you for that, too.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:37 a.m. in Doolittle Hall at the U.S. Air Force Academy. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gen. Tab Oelstrom, USAF, Superintendent, and Fisher DeBerry, football coach, U.S. Air Force Academy.

**Commencement Address at the
United States Air Force Academy
in Colorado Springs**

June 2, 1999

Thank you very much. General Oelstrom, Mrs. Oelstrom; General and Mrs. Ryan; General and Mrs. Myers; General Lorenz, Mrs. Lorenz; General and Mrs. Wagie; Colonel

Wilbourne; Cadet Friedman; Acting Secretary Peters, whom I intend to nominate as Secretary of the Air Force; ladies and gentlemen.

I'd like to also acknowledge, particularly, four graduates of the Air Force Academy that I brought to this ceremony today because they are serving our country ably in the White House: Bob Bell, class of 1969, my Senior Counsel for Defense Policy and Arms Control, who is soon to become the Assistant Secretary General of NATO; Colonel Ed Rice, class of 1978; Lieutenant Colonel Betsy Pimentel, class of 1980; and my White House physician, Lieutenant Colonel Richard Tubb, class of 1981. The Air Force Academy has been good to our administration and to the White House.

To the families and friends of the graduating class, and especially to you, the members of the class of 1999, I extend heartfelt congratulations. It's been a long road from Doolie Summer to graduation. But you have achieved, as General Oelstrom told me, an unparalleled record of academic achievement, athletic success, and excellence in your military endeavors. From here on out, the sky is the limit for you.

I want to offer special congratulations to the graduates from other nations who are part of this class. We wish you well as you return home and hope you will forever cherish your bonds with the Academy and your classmates.

Now, before I go any further, I want to carry out a venerable tradition. By the power vested in me as Commander in Chief, I hereby grant amnesty to cadets who are marching tours or serving restrictions or confinements for minor misconduct.

One of the cadets suggested I also raise everyone's grades. *[Laughter]* But I'm told that even the Commander in Chief can't do that.

Just a moment ago, I participated in another traditional ceremony I've been part of every year but one since I became President—it's now up there almost as routine and sacrosanct as giving the State of the Union Address, lighting the White House Christmas tree, or pardoning the Thanksgiving turkey. For the sixth time in 7 years, I presented

the Commander in Chief's Trophy to the Air Force Academy Falcons.

Many believe it was the best team in the Academy's history, with a 12–1 record, a top-10 ranking, victory in the conference, in the bowl game, over Army and Navy. In the last two seasons, second in the Nation in scoring defense to Ohio State, where the linebackers are the size of C-130's. *[Laughter]* And the team did all this in spite of an incredibly sportsman-like decision never to deploy a "stealth" running back or throw a single, laser-guided pass. I appreciate that, and I congratulate you.

Ladies and gentlemen, the class of 1999 represents—and today you rededicate yourselves—to the same remarkable combination of accomplishment, grit, and self-sacrifice our service men and women have embodied for more than two centuries now. You can be reminded by that just by looking over at Sijan Hall, named for a Medal of Honor winner tortured and killed in Vietnam, to be reminded of the finest example of courage and honor in terrible and terrifying circumstances.

Those qualities are on display today when Air Force men and women serve at home and abroad, from Iraq to Korea, to helping hurricane victims in Central America, and now in the historic effort to reverse the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and restore the people of that shattered land to their homes.

A month ago I went to our airbases at Spangdahlem and Ramstein, Germany, to visit the pilots and support crews who are flying our missions over Kosovo and the young people in uniform bringing aid to the refugees there. I wish every American could have been with me to see the courage, the intensity, the skill it takes for our pilots to fly these aircraft at high speeds through enemy defenses, putting ordinance on target, putting their own lives in greater danger to avoid civilian casualties on the ground, coordinating with aircrews from more than a dozen other countries, then coming home to debrief, rest, and do it all over again.

These young Americans know they're doing the right thing. They're determined to prevail. It is impossible to see them and talk to them and come away with the slightest

iota of cynicism about our Nation and our role and responsibilities in the world.

We are joined today here by two of these brave American airmen. I cannot mention their names, under our procedures, for they are still flying missions in Kosovo. But the first is a pilot of a B-2 bomber who graduated from the Academy in 1986 and who has flown his craft from Whiteman Air Force Base on strike missions over heavily defended areas in Serbia. The second graduated from the Academy in 1980 and now flies a C-130, ferrying lifesaving supplies to the refugees fleeing Kosovo. I would like to ask them to stand and ask you to recognize them for their courage and for their service. *[Applause]* I am very proud of them and very proud of you for following in their tradition.

America became a great nation not just because our land was generous to those who settled it, not just because our forebears who came here were clever and worked hard, but also because whenever our beliefs and ideals have been threatened, Americans have always stepped forward to defend them.

Kosovo is a small province in a small country, but it's a big test of what we believe in and stand for: Our commitment to leave to our children a world where people are not uprooted and slaughtered en masse because of their racial or ethnic heritage or their religious faith; our fundamental interest in building a lasting peace in an undivided, free Europe so that young Americans never have to go there again to fight and perish in large numbers; our interest in preserving our Alliance for freedom and peace with our 19 NATO Allies.

There are also differences, however, between this conflict and those we have waged in the past. Kosovo is a communications age conflict, as General Oelstrom and I were just discussing. It is waged at a time when footage of airstrikes is beamed to homes across the world even before our pilots have returned to their bases, a time when every accidental civilian casualty is highlighted, but also when the victims of terrible war crimes can give testimony to the whole world within days of those crimes being committed.

In World War II, Americans knew they were fighting to end a great horror. But what news we had then about Nazi atrocities came

to us delayed and piecemeal from the few refugees and couriers who managed to escape occupied Europe. It was only in victory, when our soldiers liberated the concentration camps, that Americans truly saw the face of the evil we had defeated.

Today, our pilots over Kosovo see the smoke of burning villages beneath them, the tanks and artillery that set them ablaze. When they turn to base, they watch the news; they see the faces of the fleeing refugees marching so many miles over mountains with only the belongings they can carry on their backs, pushing their elderly along in wheelbarrows. They hear the voices of victims telling stories of young men singled out and shot along the road, young women raped, and children torn from their parents. They also hear the voices of those who say all is not lost because the nations of NATO are with us and will not let us down.

Our service men and women can see today what we are fighting against and what we are fighting for. So can the American people and the entire world.

Now, Mr. Milosevic has been indicted by the U.N. War Crimes Tribunal, the first time a sitting leader of a nation has been held responsible by an international body for ordering war crimes and crimes against humanity.

There are still some who assert that our bombing is somehow responsible for the atrocities his forces have committed against the Kosovar people. That reminds me of the old story of the young boy who came running home to his mother with a bloody nose. When his mother asked him what happened, he replied, "It all started when the other kid hit me back." *[Laughter]*

We know that by the time our airstrikes began, the Serb campaign of executions and expulsions had already started. In fact, Mr. Milosevic has been indicted in part for a massacre that took place in January. Tens of thousands of refugees already had been pushed from their homes in carefully pre-planned attacks. Serbian forces were already positioned for the offensive we have seen unfold.

Mr. Milosevic already had unleashed in Kosovo the same paramilitary warlords who spent 4 years ethnically cleansing Bosnia and

Croatia, where 2½ million people were driven from their homes and a quarter million were killed before NATO bombing and the resistance of Bosnians and Croats brought us to the Dayton peace agreement.

Ethnic cleansing in Kosovo was not a response to bombing. It is the 10-year method of Mr. Milosevic's madness. Had we done nothing, the tragedy would have been permanent, accepted, and in effect, condoned by the world community.

Now, Mr. Milosevic had 40,000 troops and nearly 300 tanks in and around Kosovo before he rejected the peace agreement the Kosovars accepted. He could not be prevented, therefore, from driving the Kosovars from their land. But he can be prevented from keeping them out of their land. His 10-year cleansing campaign will end once and for all.

This time the world did not wait, as we did in Bosnia, for 4 more years of fruitless appeals to reason in the face of evil. We have acted quickly to end this horror, and that is exactly what we will do.

Let me be clear about why we have done this and how we intend to meet our goals. As members of the United States Air Force, the members of this class especially are entitled to know.

Our reasons are both moral and strategic. There is a moral imperative because what we're facing in Kosovo is not just ethnic and religious hatred, discrimination and conflict, which are, unfortunately, too abundant in this world. America and NATO's military power cannot be deployed just because people don't like each other or even because they fight each other.

What is going on in Kosovo is something much worse and, thankfully, more rare: an effort by a political leader to systematically destroy or displace an entire people because of their ethnicity and their religious faith; an effort to erase the culture and history and presence of a people from their land. Where we have the ability to do so, we as a nation and our democratic allies must take a stand against this. We do have the ability to do so at NATO's doorstep in Europe.

But there is also a clear strategic imperative. Since I took office, I've worked hard to build for you and your future a Europe

that, for the first time in history, is undivided, democratic, and at peace. Because if there is anything we have learned from the bloody 20th century with its two World Wars, it is that peace and stability in Europe is vital to our own security and freedom.

Now, think what the United States has helped to accomplish in the last few years. Many thought the NATO Alliance would wither and die after the cold war. But it is strong and vital, with new partnerships with 25 nations, stretching all the way from the Baltic Sea to central Asia. Three new democracies, Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, which spent the last half century struggling for their own freedom in the cold war, are now our NATO Allies defending the freedom of Europeans.

We've helped Russia deal with the difficult challenges it faces on the road to democracy and stability, the road to being a part of and a partner in Europe. We also helped immeasurably to end the war in Bosnia, and now we're keeping the peace there with a coalition that unites every former adversary in all of European history: France and Germany, Germany and Poland, Poland and Russia, Russia and the United States.

We have made clear that NATO membership will remain open to other responsible democracies from central and southeastern Europe. And through our efforts in the Balkans, we have also helped to bridge the gulf between Europe and the Islamic world, the source of so much trouble over the last millennium, and the source of troubling tensions still today.

The killing Mr. Milosevic unleashed in the former Yugoslavia a decade ago is now the last major barrier to a Europe whole, free, and at peace, the last gasp of an aggressive nationalism that has shattered the lives of so many Europeans in this century and drawn so many Americans to fight there in wars. It threatens all the progress made in Europe since the end of the cold war.

Imagine what would have happened had we let the violence in Kosovo escalate without taking a stand. NATO would have been discredited for doing nothing about ethnic conflict and cleansing on its doorstep. The